CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A product netting machine comprising:

a base;

a chute on the base having a receiving end for receiving products, and a discharge end for discharging products, the chute including a netting rucker to receive netting rucked on the rucker, and to permit netting to move with discharged products from the discharge end;

a product receiver on the base at the discharge end of the chute;

voiders on the base operated to form a rope section of the netting between the product receiver and the discharge end of the chute when a discharged product is on the product receiver; and

a clipper on the base operated to clip the rope section of the netting;

whereby successively netted and clipped products are formed by the product netting machine.

2. A product netting machine as in claim 1, further comprising:

a netting handle former on the base operated to loop the rope section to form a looped handle in the rope section of the netting;

whereby the machine forms netted products with netting handles.

3. A product netting machine as in claim 2, the clipper clipping the looped rope section to secure the handle.

4. A product netting machine as in claim 2, with the netting handle former of claim 2, the handle former including a loop former movable to engage the rope section,

movable to draw the engaged rope section to create a loop-length of the rope section, and movable to twist the engaged, drawn, loop-length of rope section to form a loop.

5. A product netting machine as in claim 4, the handle former further including motive means on the base for moving the loop former to engage, draw, and twist the rope section.

6. A product netting machine as in claim 4, for a rope section defining a line of movement of the rope section, the loop former movable transversely of the line to extend past the rope section and engage the rope section on retraction, the loop former retractable transversely to draw the rope section, and the loop former rotatable around an axis skewed from the line to twist the rope section, to form the loop.

7. A product netting machine as in claim 6, the handle former further including motive means on the base for moving the loop former transversely of the line, and rotatably around an axis skewed from the line.

8. A product netting machine as in claim 7, the motive means for moving the loop former rotatably around an axis perpendicular to the line, to overlap two spaced segments of the rope section while forming a loop between the spaced segments.

9. A product netting machine as in claim 8, the loop former including a disc with an outer perimeter to form the loop around the outer perimeter of the disc.

10. A product netting machine as in claim 9, the motive means further for moving the disc linearly transversely to the line, for allowing the disc to move past the rope

section and then engage the rope section with the loop forming around the outer perimeter of the disc on retraction of the loop former.

11. A product netting machine as in claim 10, the loop former further including an openable and closable clam shell including the disc.

12. A product netting machine as in claim 1, further comprising product guides on the base associated with the product receiver.

13. A product netting machine as in claim 12, the product guides being pivotally mounted for engaging and disengaging products on the product receiver.

14. A product netting machine as in claim 12, the product guides mounted on opposite sides of the discharge end of the chute.

15. A product netting machine as in claim 12, the product guides holding the product adjacent the voiders.

16. A product netting machine as in claim 1, further comprising means for sensing a product on the product receiver and actuating the voiders and clipper.

17. A product netting machine as in claim 2, further comprising means for sensing a product on the product receiver and actuating the voiders, clipper and netting handle former.

18. A product netting machine as in claim 1, in which the chute is gravity driven and includes product ribs or rails for centering and ease of movement of products.

19. A method of product netting comprising:

moving a product through a chute into netting to enclose the product with the netting; voiding the enclosing netting to form a rope section of the netting between the product and the chute; and

clipping the rope section of the netting;

whereby successively netted and clipped products may be formed by the method.

20. A method of product netting as in claim 19 comprising:

forming a netting handle by forming a loop of the rope section to form a looped handle in the rope section of the netting; thereby forming netted products with netting handles.

21. A method as in claim 20, the clipping of the rope section being clipping of the looped rope section to secure the handle.